

Republic Building
429 W. Muhammed Ali Blvd.
Louisville
Jefferson County
Kentucky

HABS No. KY-140

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PHOTOGRAPHS

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

REPUBLIC BUILDING

HABS No. KY-140

- Location: The building is located at the northeast corner of Fifth Street and Muhammad Ali Boulevard, Louisville, Jefferson County, Kentucky. Prior to street renamings, Muhammad Ali Boulevard was known as Walnut Street. The mailing address is 429 West Muhammad Ali Boulevard.
- Present Owner: Oxford Properties, Inc.
2226 Citizens Plaza
Louisville, Kentucky 40202
- Present Occupant: Moseson and King Clothing Store.
- Present Use: Commercial.
- Significance: The Republic Building is one of the early office buildings designed by the Louisville architectural firm of Joseph and Joseph. The building is eclectic in design showing the strong influence of the Classical Revival, especially elements of the Italian Renaissance. The Republic Building is an important early tall building in downtown Louisville. The firm was an important factor in shaping the character of downtown Louisville and its affluent suburbs from 1910 to World War II.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1916.
2. Architect: Joseph and Joseph, Architects, Louisville, Kentucky. The Republic Building is characteristic of their early work. The firm was relatively young at the time.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The following is a list of past owners for this building. The source of the records is County Clerk's Office, Jefferson County Courthouse, Louisville, Kentucky.

Republic Realty, original owners, circa 1915.
1944, Byron & Lula Brubaker
1955, Robert A. Futterman
1956, Republic Investors
1974, BHS Co. and Republic Assocs.
1980, Oxford Properties

(Note: Deed Book and page numbers for the above records are not available).

4. Builder: C. A. Koerner and Company.
 5. Alterations and additions: Wood paneling on wood stud partitions have been added in offices. Store fronts have been obscured due to modernization.
- B. Historical Context: The Republic Building has been an important commercial structure in downtown Louisville. It housed offices on upper floors. One of the oldest tenants on the first floor was Moseson and King Clothing Store.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Republic Building is a typical example of early 20th century commercial building with a flat roof and extensive fenestration plans.
2. Condition of fabric: Poor, due to years of neglect.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Muhammad Ali Boulevard facade is 54'-3" in width and the Fifth Street side is 106'-3" in length. It is an eleven story structure and is 137'-4" tall.
2. Foundation: Steel reinforced concrete.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: The Fifth Street (west) facade is divided into seven bays and the Muhammad Ali Boulevard (south) facade has three bays. The first and second stories are unified by piers of structural glazed tile which terminate in a cartouche which is surrounded by green terra-cotta tile. The first and second floors are divided horizontally by iron panels decorated with cartouche and swag motifs. The first floor bays have large window areas with doorways for shops. The fenestration on the other floors consists of alternating double and triple groups of windows. An extended stringcourse of egg and dart mold divides the second and third floors and the third and fourth floors. The third floor walls are covered in structural glazed tile. The fourth through ninth floors are brick. These floors are unified vertically with brick piers of alternating width which terminate at another egg and dart mold stringcourse. The wider piers are also decorated with the cartouche and green terra-cotta tile motif. Under the cluster of triple windows of these floors are stone panels, each of which are decorated with highly three-dimensional cartouches and swags of garlands. The upper two stories are composed of horizontally segmented layers of structural glazed tile. The fenestration and pier patterns continue from the lower stories. The wider piers also end in a cartouche. The extended cornice is pressed sheet metal and has dentils, brackets and corbels. The treatment of the building is identical in the three bays of the Muhammad Ali Boulevard facade. The main entrance to the upper floors is on the far right-hand bay. There are an interesting pair of original lions' heads over the main entrance. The building's basic wall color is buff.

4. Structural system, framing: Steel reinforced concrete slab on steel reinforced concrete column and beam grid construction.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: All doorways are typical in that they are standard in shape and size with no notable traits.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Windows are double-hung except for the first floor store front windows which are large plate glass.
6. Roof: The roof is rectangular and flat with one penthouse which houses the elevator equipment. The roof is built-up type with a 2'-0" parapet wall around back of building and 4'-9" ornamental parapet wall around street sides. Between roof and top floor is a plumbing and electrical access space. The cornice is extended with decorative corbels and dentils,

An original arched canopy was used to shelter the main (south) entrance. Since no supporting columns were used the canopy was held by metal rods fastened to the wall; lions' heads covered the fasteners. It was later removed.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:
 - a. Basement: The basement houses boiler, electrical and plumbing equipment and other rooms.
 - b. First floor: The main 3/4 portion of the floor is divided into three long spaces facing in a north-south direction. These spaces are achieved by partitions. Each space has an entrance on the south (main) side. The east space contains the reception room, three-elevator lobby, rest rooms, and a stairway. The west space is mostly open and has one entrance facing Fifth Street. Between the east and west spaces is the central space which is also mostly open. The partitions separating the three spaces contain structural columns. Two other stairways are located in the rear sections of central and west spaces.

The remaining (rear) portion of the building contains approximately five rooms. It has two entrances on the Fifth (west) Street facade; the central entrance leads to a stairway.
 - c. Second through Eleventh floors: All upper floors were used for office space. They are similar in layout and are generally U-shaped. In the east side of the building each floor has three elevators. Each floor also has a stairway, located near the elevator lobby. There are approximately 15 rooms to each floor. Many rooms come in a variety of sizes. The elevators culminate at the roof top, sheltered by a penthouse, which also shelters elevator motors.

2. Stairways: The main stairway is of marble. Several stairways also exist. The fire escape is on the northwest corner of Fifth Street side from roof to ground.
3. Flooring: White marble on concrete slab in all stairs and all hallways. Basement has poured concrete slab with red tile floor.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster on gypsum block, structural clay tile, or concrete with paint or marble finish.
5. Decorative features and trim: Stair banister is done in wood with decorative iron balusters in secondary stair. There is white marble on walls and floor in main hallways and white marble on walls, floor, and ceiling in main stair with red marble trim. Simple wood moldings of 4-1/2" surround all windows and doors.
6. Mechanical Equipment:
 - a. Heating: Gas-fired boiler in basement. The building is heated by steam. Elevator motors are located in the penthouse on the roof.
 - b. Lighting: Florescent lighting throughout the building.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The building is located in the downtown district of the City of Louisville. The main entrance faces south.

Prepared by: L. P. Melillo and Associates
Architects
Louisville, Kentucky
1980

and

Marty Hedgepeth
Director of Research
Historic Landmarks and
Preservation Districts Commission
May 20, 1980

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Early Views:

Joseph and Joseph, Architects and Engineers. New York: Architectural Catalog Company, 1925.

Louisville Carrier Journal. June 2, 1912. View of an elevation of the building.

2 historical photographs of the building are at the University of Louisville Photographic Archives, Louisville, Kentucky. Photocopies of these photographs are included in the HABS collection.

B. Interview:

Alfred Joseph, interviewed by Marty Hedgepeth, Director of Research, Historic Landmarks and Preservation Districts Commissions, Louisville, Kentucky, April 1978.

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Deed Books. County Clerks' Office, Jefferson County, Courthouse, Louisville, Kentucky.

Kentucky Historic Inventory Form. "The Republic Building," by Marty Hedgepeth, Director of Research, Historic Landmarks and Preservation Districts Commissions, Louisville, Kentucky, April 12, 1978. A copy of the inventory is at the Kentucky Heritage Commission, Frankfort, Kentucky.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Joseph and Joseph: Architects and Engineers. New York: Architectural Catalog Company, 1925.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The project was the result of a Memorandum of Agreement between the City of Louisville and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in compliance with Executive Order 11593 as a mitigative effort in the redevelopment plan for the City of Louisville. The written documentation was prepared for HABS by Marty Hedgepeth, Director of Research, Historic Landmarks and Preservation Districts Commission, Louisville, Kentucky, and by L. P. Melillo and Associates, architects, Louisville, Kentucky. The architectural measured drawings were prepared, also for HABS, by L. P. Melillo and Associates. Susan McCown, a HABS staff historian in the Washington, D.C. office, edited the documentation for transmittal to the Library of Congress. John A. Burns, AIA, was the HABS co-ordinator for the whole project. Photographers Douglas Fowley and Ralph Homan, both of Douglas Fowley Photography, Louisville, Kentucky, took the documentary photographs of the building on May 8, 1980, and on July 2, 1980.